United Nations A/61/343

General Assembly

Distr.: General
14 September 2006

Original: English

Sixty-first session
Agenda item 55 (b)
Globalization and interdependence: international migration and development

Letter dated 30 August 2006 from the Permanent Representative of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to transmit to you the Declaration that was adopted as the outcome document of the Regional Consultation on Migration, Remittances and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, which took place in Santo Domingo, the Dominican Republic, on 27 and 28 July 2006 (see annex).

The Regional Consultation brought together 75 representatives from 13 countries, namely Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua and Peru. Participants agreed that the Government of the Dominican Republic would submit this outcome document, on behalf of all those represented in the Regional Consultation, for consideration at the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, convened in New York by the United Nations General Assembly on 14 and 15 September 2006.

The Regional Consultation was convened by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and was jointly organized with the Government of the Dominican Republic, the Global Foundation for Democracy and Development and the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation, in keeping with the aims of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and the United Nations Public-Private Alliance for Rural Development. The Global Foundation for Democracy and Development hosted the meeting at its headquarters in Santo Domingo.

Participants in the Consultation represented the main stakeholder groups — Governments, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and international organizations and foundations. Among the NGOs, discussants came from home town associations and other diaspora organizations, as well as from community organizations in countries of origin.

President Leonel Fernandez-Reyna opened the event with a keynote address. Three other high officials of the Dominican Government also spoke, including the

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Secretary of State, Office for Information, Analysis and Strategic Program; the Secretary of State, Special Adviser to the President, Coordinator of the Presidential Council for Dominicans Abroad; and the Deputy on behalf of the Secretary of State, Foreign Affairs. The United Nations Resident Coordinator in the Dominican Republic and the Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Development Policy of UNDP offered introductory remarks and participated in the deliberations.

The Consultation provided a stimulating opportunity for a wide variety of stakeholders to examine the impact that migration and remittances are having on development in the region, and to formulate recommendations for general attention and for action by UNDP and others. Participation by representatives from the private sector was especially welcome, and participation by the different stakeholders on equal footing made this consultation a unique gathering. It strengthened the deliberations, facilitated networking and assisted in formulating the elements of the resulting Declaration.

The rich discussions and practical proposals of the Regional Consultation were valuable to the participants and the implementation of these should be beneficial. Likewise, it is hoped that the deliberations of the High-level Dialogue will be crowned with success.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly for consideration at its High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development.

(*Signed*) Erasmo **Lara-Peña**
Ambassador, Permanent Representative

Annex to the letter dated 30 August 2006 from the Permanent Representative of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Declaration

We the participants in the Regional Consultation on Migration, Remittances and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Santo Domingo, the Dominican Republic, 27-28 July 2006,

Representing major stakeholder groups from thirteen countries of the region, namely Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua and Peru, and counting among us participants from Governments, civil society entities including home town associations and other diaspora organizations, national and international non-government organizations, the business community and United Nations entities,

Grateful to the President of the Dominican Republic, H.E. Dr. Leonel Fernandez Reyna, for honouring this meeting with his presence and keynote statement,

Appreciative of the efforts of the Government of the Dominican Republic, the Global Foundation for Democracy and Development (FUNGLODE), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation, in keeping with the aims of the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and United Nations Public-Private Alliance for Rural Development, and with financial support from Foundations and private sector companies and other contributors,

Bearing in mind General Assembly resolution 60/206 of 22 December 2005 on facilitation and reduction of the cost of transfer of migrant remittances,

Recognizing that remittance flows are private transactions, primarily for the benefit of households, and therefore not to be confused with or considered as a substitute for official development assistance (ODA),

Recognizing that remittances, while representing a very significant and increasingly important flow of resources, and comprising sizeable portions of the Gross National Product (GNP) in many countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, yet remains inadequately explored, facilitated or mobilized to meet existing and future demands of senders and receivers,

Having discussed in our meeting numerous issues of migration, remittances and development as concerns national government relations with their diaspora, financial and other forms of support from abroad to families and others in countries of origin, the relation of migration and remittances to development and the achievement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), characteristics of South-North and South-South migration, private sector perspectives on money transfers, banking and finance, and country experiences on matters of diaspora engagement and development,

Wishing to convey to the Secretary-General of the United Nations information and proposals for consideration at the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development to be held 14-15 September 2006 at United Nations Headquarters,

1. *Recognize* with appreciation the efforts made by governments to establish high-level offices for diaspora affairs, and to promote participation by diaspora communities at their request in the political life and the economic and social development of their home countries, and *encourage* strengthened implementation of these principles and their application by governments of other countries;

2. *Urge* priority attention to the expansion of productive uses of remittances, within and beyond immediate consumption needs, and that this include facilitation of access to formal banking services, savings, loans, insurance, investment opportunities and other instruments;

3. *Urge* the governments of remittance sending countries to enhance access by Money Transmitter Organizations (MTO) to banking services, and to standardize at national levels the requirements for MTO compliance with government regulations;

4. *Welcome* the full participation of private sector companies in the multi-stakeholder deliberations of this meeting, and *urge* greater development of commercial and other partnerships with governments and other stakeholders to promote profitable and equitable national business development for meeting the MDGs, consistent with the principles of the United Nations Global Compact;

5. *Note and encourage* the possibilities afforded for increased leverage of remittances in home country development activities through cooperative contributions and collaborative implementation by national and local authorities, the private sector, diaspora groups and other civil society organizations, and international bodies;

6. *Urge* that strong efforts be made by all stakeholders to facilitate transfers, increase system efficiencies and reduce costs, including through enhanced information and communication technology (ICT), and to improve access to existing and new financial instruments, so as to make remittances more beneficial to recipients generally, more effective as instruments of protection and empowerment and more able to help achieve the MDGs at local and national levels;

7. *In particular urge* more concerted attention, building upon the interest and willingness of potential partners, to link remittances with institutions for savings and microfinance, so as to enable individuals and community groups to engage more fully in entrepreneurial activities;

8. *Recognize* the prominent role of women as recipients of remittances and their increasingly important role as remittances senders, *urge* priority attention to elimination of legal and administrative constraints to their full and equal participation, and support for building up capacities to enable women to take maximum advantage of these resource flows, and *urge* the UN-INSTRAW to continue and expand its valuable work on the gender dimensions of migration and remittance flows and the relation of this to achieving the MDGs;

9. *Urge* the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation to expand their global institutional partnerships to help developing countries promote their best practices, technology and research studies on remittances and diaspora leveraging, so as to increase the potentials of South-South cooperation within the region and beyond, within the overall context of achieving the MDGs;

10. *Recognize* the contributions made by home town associations, alumni and professional associations, and other diaspora community groups that maintain ties, promote national cultures and encourage development in countries of origin, and *urge* further such activities on their part, with support for relevant capacity-building by donor and other entities in a position to collaborate;

11. *Welcome* the exchange of information on specific situations and innovative practices that emerged from this meeting, and *recommend* that governments and international agencies including UNDP, in cooperation with other stakeholders, take further measures to gather and promote availability of relevant demographic and other social and economic data particularly in the informal sector, best practices and lessons learned, so as to facilitate greater understanding, support and synergies;

12. *Urge* UNDP to use the results of this meeting as a platform for new policies and capacity development initiatives at all levels, particularly at the local level, in response to needs and opportunities identified by stakeholders;

13. *Request* the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development to give particular attention to the proposals in this Declaration, which represent a unique contribution from parties representing or active in relation to matters of migration, remittances and development in the Latin America and Caribbean region.